

REMARKS

Claims 21- 27, 31-33 and 38-42 are now pending. The Office Communication raised objections to the abstract and to "Claims 1" which the applicant interprets as claim 20, since claim 1 has been cancelled. The objections are addressed in the above amendments. Claim 33 was rejected as having been directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicants request removal of that rejection because the claim depends from claim 21 which is directed to statutory subject matter and there is no basis to conclude that the method of identifying devices would "become" non-statutory simply because it is performed in conjunction with a computer program product, e.g., software. Other rejections under Section 101 are moot in view of this amendment.

Claims 41 and 42 are added in lieu of canceled claims 34-37 to define patentable subject matter which further distinguishes over the prior art. Reconsideration of the claims is requested in view of the following remarks.

All of the examined claims were rejected under Section 102 based on Allon (U.S. 5,539,883) or under Section 103 based on Allon in view of Liu (U.S. 6,574,664). It is respectfully submitted that the amendment to independent claim 21 and the presentation of independent claim 41 in lieu of canceled claim 34 provides a basis to allow the application.

Claim 21 now describes a series of features which are not present in the prior art. Specifically the claim is directed to replacing a drive device in an automation network. The method includes operating the replacement drive device to identify for the replacement drive device the arrangement of connections in the network relative to the replacement drive device, in accord with a predefined hierarchy of the connections, and with a second device providing information regarding a relationship or order of the drive device with respect to the second device.

The replacement drive device of claim 21 is operated to identify a first of the nodes to which it is assigned, to identify other devices including the second device; and to receive information from the second device enabling the drive device to ascertain: the number of connections of the first node and a predefined hierarchy of the connections and the connection with which the replacement drive device is connected to the first node, and to determine for the first node other connections which are connected to other nodes or devices.

Independent claim 41 also defines patentable subject matter. For example, no combination of the prior art results in a reconfigurable network for which the claimed method

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Atty. Doc. No. 2003P05648WOUS

identifies an order of devices in the network, thereby enabling determination of relative spatial arrangements among the devices. The method specifically requires, in a network configured according to a first hierarchical arrangement: a first of the devices performing a series of determinations including:

determining a first of the nodes to which it is assigned,
determining other devices upstream or downstream from the first device,
determining the number of connections of the first node, the first hierarchical arrangement of the connections and nodes, and the connection with which the device is connected to the first node and
determining for the first node other connections which are connected to other nodes or devices.

The first device of claim 41 thereby acquires, in accord with the first hierarchical arrangement, relationships among nodes and connections to which other devices are connected. It is also submitted that the dependent claims each further define patentable subject matter.

Conclusion

Based on the above amendments the application now presents allowable subject matter and the application is in condition for allowance. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees due in connection with this paper, including the fees specified in 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 (c), 1.17(a)(1) and 1.20(d), or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-2179.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 12/18/03

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